

**Amendments to the claims:**

Please cancel claims 1-3, 8-9, 13-17, and 20, without prejudice.

Please amend claims 4, 10, and 18, and please insert new claim 21, as specified in the following listing of claims.

The listing of claims given below will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Currently amended) ~~The signaling method as claimed in claim 3, wherein there is further included a step of~~ A signaling method for line terminal equipment health and status information comprising the steps of:
  - providing at least first and second line terminal equipment (LTEs);
  - transmitting by said at least first and second line terminal equipment a health and status information to a plurality of bearer payload processors (BPPs);
  - collecting by each of said plurality of BPPs the health and status information from the at least first and second LTEs;
  - concatenating by each of the plurality of BPPs the health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs; and
  - broadcasting by each of the plurality of BPPs the concatenated health and status information to each of the at least first and second LTEs.

5. (Original) The signaling method as claimed in claim 4, wherein there is further included a step of comparing by each of the plurality of BPPs the concatenated health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs.
6. (Original) The signaling method as claimed in claim 4, wherein there is further included a step of comparing by each LTE the concatenated health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs.
7. (Original) The signaling method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the step of transmitting by said at least first and second line terminal equipment the health and status information includes a step of transmitting the health and status information included with bearer traffic.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Currently amended) ~~The signaling method as claimed in claim 8, wherein there is further included a step of~~ A signaling method for line terminal equipment health and status information comprising the steps of:
  - providing at least first and second line terminal equipment (LTEs);
  - receiving by a plurality of bearer payload processors (BPPs) health and status information of the at least first and second line terminal equipment;
  - concatenating by each of the plurality of BPPs the health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs; and
  - broadcasting by each of the plurality of BPPs the concatenated health and status information to each of the at least first and second LTEs.

11. (Original) The signaling method as claimed in claim 10, wherein there is further included a step of comparing by each of the plurality of BPPs the concatenated health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs.

12. (Original) The signaling method as claimed in claim 10, wherein there is further included a step of comparing by each LTE the concatenated health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) ~~The signaling method as claimed in claim 17, wherein there is further included a step of~~ A signaling method for line terminal equipment health and status information comprising the steps of:  
providing at least first and second line terminal equipment (LTEs);  
receiving by a plurality of bearer payload processors (BPPs) health and status information of the at least first and second line terminal equipment;  
comparing by each of the plurality of BPPs the health and status information received from the at least first and second LTEs;  
concatenating by each of the plurality of BPPs the health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs; and  
broadcasting by each of the plurality of BPPs the concatenated health and status information to each of the at least first and second LTEs.
19. (Original) The signaling method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the step of broadcasting further includes a step of transmitting the concatenated health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs included with bearer traffic.
20. (Canceled)
21. (New) The signaling method as claimed in claim 18, wherein there is further included a step of comparing by each LTE the health and status information of the at least first and second LTEs.